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United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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ABA Women Lawyers to Honor Ninth Circuit Judge M. Margaret McKeown

SAN FRANCISCO – Judge M. Margaret McKeown of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit is among the 2010 recipients of the prestigious Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award from the American Bar Association’s Commission on Women in the Profession.

The award is named after the first woman lawyer in America, Margaret Brent, who won every case during an eight-year legal career that began in 1638. It is given to women in the law whose many achievements have made them role models for future generations of women lawyers.

“It is an honor to receive the award and humbling to be among the women considered to be trailblazers in the profession,” Judge McKeown said of the recognition.

Nominated by President Clinton, Judge McKeown has served on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals since 1998. She has sat on hundreds of appellate panels and authored more than 300 opinions, including ones on sex discrimination and female genital mutilation. The 58-year-old jurist maintains chambers in San Diego.

In addition to her work on the bench, Judge McKeown is actively involved in court governance, serving on various committees at the circuit and national levels, including chairing the Codes of Conduct Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States.

Prior to becoming a judge, Judge McKeown was in private practice in Seattle, where she became the first woman partner at the law firm of Perkins Coie LLP. She founded the firm’s intellectual

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property practice and was the first woman to serve as a managing director on its executive committee. She also created the firm's part-time lawyer program and its Saturday day care program in cooperation with the YMCA.

Judge McKeown was the founder and first co-president of the statewide Washington Women Lawyers. She was the first woman lawyer to represent the Western District of Washington at the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference. She served as the first woman president of the Federal Bar Association for the Western District of Washington, and was a member of the Ninth Circuit Gender Bias Task Force, the first federal gender-bias task force to be established.

Judge McKeown, who also was a White House fellow and worked as a special assistant to the secretary of the interior, had this advice for young women lawyers just beginning their careers:

“Find a mentor, pursue your passion within the law, and if you want to be a trial lawyer or litigator, find a way to be in court as often as possible.”

The Brent awards will be presented during a ceremony and luncheon on August 8, 2010, at the ABA's annual meeting in San Francisco. Other 2010 winners are Brooksley E. Born of Washington, D.C., Elizabeth J. Cabraser of San Francisco, Willie Stevenson Glanton of Des Moines, Iowa, and Laura Stein of Oakland, Calif.

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